

NOTE: Update will be reflected in the papers to the next public session of the Scottish Police Authority on 30 April 2020.

SPA Board Update – COVID 19 – 16th April 2020, 10 am (teleconference)

Attendees: Members

David Crichton (DC)
Matt Smith (MS)
Martyn Evans (ME)
Tom Halpin (TH)
Michelle Miller (MM)
Elaine Wilkinson (EW)
Mary Pitcaithly (MP)
Jane Ryder (JR)
Bob Hayes (BH)
Caroline Stuart (CS)
Grant Macrae (GM)

Attendees: Officers

Lynn Brown (LB)
John McCroskie (JM)
Catherine McIntyre (CM)
Lynne Clark (LC)

Apologies: Officers

Vanessa Ewing (VE)

Introduction and Update

DC 's opening remarks confirmed the primary focus of the weekly Board teleconference was to update Members on COVID 19 related matters and reiterated that these were not decision-making sessions. DC also added that the Exceptional Circumstances Committee was in place if needed during COVID 19.

Independent Advisory Group – DC clarified that the Authority would be the recipient of the report resulting from this group and that SPA officers would be supporting the work of the group.

It is expected that the first meeting of the Group may take place as early as tomorrow depending on availability of the membership. There will be an announcement later today on that membership which will include Martyn Evans who will act as the conduit between the group and the SPA Board.

Post meeting note: *the first meeting of the Advisory Group took place on Thursday afternoon (16 April)*

2-weekly Summary bulletin – Police Scotland (PS) will provide this summary update for the SPA based on the daily bulletin which is currently in place. This replaces the SPA weekly summary. In addition PS will provide occasional papers on specific COVID topics as required.

Director of Forensic Services Update

TN updated Members on the arrangements in place within FS to deal with the exceptional circumstances, this included the current operational demand, the status on PPE, absence rate, COVID testing, ongoing engagement with staff and stakeholders.

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TN will be meeting with PS and COPFS to discuss the implications of the new legislation and the impact for FS prioritisation and the downstream consequences of this.

Key issue currently for TN is the balance of staff safety and wellbeing and the continuing delivery of forensic services.

CEO Update

LB updated Members on absence rates within SPA corporate and the ongoing communications with staff.

LB also provided an update against the actions raised at the Board update meeting on 9 April.

30 April Board Development Day – a part of this meeting will be repurposed as a public Board meeting focussed on COVID 19. PS will have representation at that session.

Death in Service – an existing process is in place with PS and it can be accessed here <https://spi.spnet.local/commonservices/people-and-development/policy-hub/Pages/Death-in-Service.aspx>

Procurement – this action was in relation to the commissioning of John Scott, QC for the Independent Advisory Group. LB confirmed for Members that the Scottish Government guidelines for procurement had been followed and a daily rate had been agreed.

Key Points to Note

Suspension of ICV - and the level of public concern and other interested bodies.

The ICV team are undertaking a desktop exercise which is shared with the custody visitors to express their independent view or concerns. Members felt that something should be shared on the SPA website that provides some reassurance about the measure being put in place.

ACTION: JM to arrange for an update on the measures which have been put in place during the suspension of custody visiting and the impact of these measures to be brought the Board update meeting on 23 April in the first instance with a view to publishing on the SPA website thereafter.

Issues of PPE Procurement – there is a general understanding that there have been and are still issues with PPE procurement

Through the Gold Command, PS are maintaining updates on the Intranet on the position of PPE. LB noted however that there are significant costs related to PPE procurement in general but that regular financial updates are being received from PS. It was noted that this issues spans the Accountable Officer role and both the Resources and Audit Committee remits and needs further discussion.

ACTION: LB will arrange a meeting, to take place before the next update meeting on 23 April, with EW and JR to discuss and agree the sequencing, decision-making and compliance around this issue.

ACTION: LB will, as of this week, provide the Board Members with weekly finance summaries. This will allow Members to ensure there is appropriate control within PS of the COVID 19 related costs and that long term impacts of these additional costs can be considered. This information will also be used to update the Justice Minister on these implications.

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Strategy on a page - JM advised Members that this document drew together the thoughts and discussion from the Board update session on 9 April and from SPA officer input on potential performance related questions linked to the PS Gold Strategy and the 7 objectives which had been set. It was agreed that the Members feedback would be sent to JM to update this document.

ACTION: Members will feed any thoughts on the 1-page strategy directly back to JM by the close of business today. Once updated this will be published on the SPA website.

ACTION: CM will issue a copy of the PS Gold Strategy to Members for information by close of business today.

SPA Governance during COVID 19 – a diagram was circulated to Members to provide a visual representation of all the existing governance forums over the coming period and where the COVID 19 related discussion would take place and it also illustrated the additional measures that have been put in place. Members agreed that this was demonstrating an appropriate level of oversight and that no additional meetings were required.

ACTION: The governance and oversight visual will be published on the website along with the 1-page strategy. Additional communications to promote the Board's position on COVID 19 measures will be discussed and agreed between JM and VE by the end of this week (e.g. Twitter).

Changes in PS operational practice – Members discussed issues being experienced in getting timely information from PS. It was felt that there were many examples in recent past of SPA being behind the curve on decisions being made in relation to operational changes and that this was still felt to be the case now. These were in particular changes that had wide ranging public interest and human rights impacts. It was felt that this is particularly relevant just now with COVID 19 and changes being implemented rapidly.

ACTION: It was agreed that this issue would be raised by the Board with the PS Senior Leadership team at the next public meeting

Role of Policing Performance Committee (PPC) – It was noted that any issues raised from the Independent Advisory Group will be directed to the PPC in the first instance. ME will continue to draft a document defining the focus of the PPC oversight of PS response to the COVID 19 situation.

ACTION: ME will draft a document, by Mon 20th April, outlining the PPC oversight of the PS response to the COVID 19 situation.

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